

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEHRAN 07063 091140Z
ACTION SS-25

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-----048715 091142Z /12

O P 091106Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3971
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA PRIORITY

S E C R E T TEHRAN 7063

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS USCINCEUR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SO US SA PFOR MASS EAID
SUBJ: IRANIAN-SOMALI RELATIONS

REF: (A) STATE 186672, (B) STATE 187011, (C) TEHRAN 7061

1. I AM BECOMING INCREASINGLY BEWILDERED BY THE VARIOUS CABLES I AM RECEIVING CONCERNING THE SUPPLY OF WEAPONS TO VARIOUS COUNTRIES IN AFRICA. WHILE I REALIZE THE SITUATION IS IN CONSIDERABLE FLUX, AND WHILE I KNOW NEXT TO NOTHING ABOUT THE COUNTRIES CONCERNED, I NEVERTHELESS FEEL THAT MORE EXPLICIT AND MORE COGENT POLICY GUIDANCE OUGHT TO BE AVAILABLE TO THIS MISSION.

2. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT THE US ORIGINALLY TOOK THE INITIATIVE, DURING THE VISIT TO TEHRAN BY SECY VANCE, TO GET IRAN INVOLVED IN THE SOMALIA PROBLEM. AFTER EXCHANGING MUCH DETAILED INFORMATION AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO SEND A MILITARY MISSION TO SOMALIA, WE NOW SUDDENLY SEEM TO BE SWITCHING SIGNALS. ALTHOUGH THEY HAD BEEN LED TO BELIEVE WE WERE SENDING A MILITARY MISSION (AND THEIR NAMES

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WERE PUBLICALLY ANNOUNCED), I NOW LEARN (REF B) THAT OUR MISSION HAS BEEN CANCELLED.

3. MORE SERIOUSLY, WE ARE NOW INSTRUCTED TO TELL THE IRANIANS THAT WE ARE CURRENTLY UNABLE TO COMPLY WITH THEIR REQUEST TO SEND SOME OBSOLETE CARBINES OF US ORIGIN, EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE BEEN ADVISED BY THE GOI THAT THE DELIVERY OF SUCH WEAPONS WAS THE

"ADMISSION PRICE" FOR THEIR MILITARY MISSION TO GET INTO SOMALIA.

4. AT THE SAME TIME, WE HAVE ADVISED CHAD TO SEEK ARMS (PRESUMABLY OF US ORIGIN) FROM IRAN. AS INDICATED IN REF C, IRAN IS PREPARED TO SEND THESE ARMS IF WE AGREE. DO I UNDERSTAND CORRECTLY THAT A US DECISION HAS BEEN MADE TO PERMIT THE TRANSFER OF MAP-SUPPLIED WEAPONS TO CHAD? IF SO, IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN TO THE GOI HOW THE "LEGAL QUESTIONS" CITED WITH RESPECT TO OUR INDECISION ON SOMALIA HAVE BEEN RESOLVED WITH RESPECT TO CHAD.

5. THE IRANIAN VIEW, WHICH IS SHARED BY MOST CONSERVATIVE ISLAMIC REPS HERE, IS THAT THE UNITED STATES APPEARS POISED ON THE BRINK OF A MORASS OF INDECISION CALCULATED TO SNATCH DEFEAT FROM THE JAWS OF VICTORY. IT IS THEIR EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE SITUATION IN THE ETHIOPIAN-SOMALIA AREA MAY END UP WITH BOTH COUNTRIES EFFECTIVELY WEAKENED BY THE CURRENT CONFLICT, BUT WITH THE SOVIETS FIRMLY IN CONTROL IN BOTH CAPITALS. IT IS THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM HERE THAT ETHIOPIA IS FALLING APART, IN ANY CASE, IT WOULD SERVE THE SOVIETS RIGHT TO END UP WITH A BASKET CASE WHILE THE US AND OUR ALLIES REPLACE THEIR INFLUENCE IN SOMALIA AND SUDAN. THEY FEEL, IN THAT INSTANCE, THAT THE CHAD SITUATION WOULD TAKE CARE OF ITSELF BECAUSE THE LIBYANS WOULD BACK OFF IF ISOLATED. ON THE OTHER HAND, THEY FEEL THAT A SOVIET SUCCESS IN BEING ABLE TO STRADDLE BOTH ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA WILL ENCOURAGE LIBYA TO CARVE UP CHAD NO MATTER WHAT EXTERNAL SUPPORT ARRIVES.

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6. IN RESPONSE TO THESE VARIOUS OBSERVATIONS, I AM UNABLE TO ARTICULATE A US POSITION BECAUSE I HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO DISCERN ONE FROM THE SIGNALS I HAVE RECEIVED. SULLIVAN

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED USCINCEUR.

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NNN

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